

Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local  
Government  
Aileen Campbell MSP



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Ms. Vicky Davidson  
Co-Ordinator  
Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company  
The Waterwheel Café  
Philiphaugh  
Selkirk TD7 5LU

30 October 2019

### **Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes Asset Transfer**

Dear Ms. Davidson,

I refer to my letter dated 20 September 2019 regarding Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company's (EYCDC) application for review relating to the purchase of 173 hectares of Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes from Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS). As you are aware the application for review was made out of time and therefore falls outwith the legislative process.

As Scottish Ministers have control of the land in question, the merits of the request were still considered taking into account all the evidence presented. This included the benefits of community empowerment and asset transfer in this case, and also the needs of forestry management. Ultimately, Ministers have concluded that the application to purchase the Gamescleuch Forest and the Ettrick Marshes is refused.

I understand this will come as a great disappointment following such a long wait. However, I note that the Independent Panel recognise, as I do, that the aspirations of community empowerment and the needs of forestry management need to be considered, but see no reason why these two requirements should be incompatible with one another. And while the request has not been granted, there is significant merit in what EYCDC want to achieve on behalf of the local community. I believe that with the right support in place, workable options can be identified to help meet these aspirations.

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That is why I have asked Professor Russel Griggs, Chair of the South of Scotland Economic Partnership to work with you and members of the Board and FLS to identify alternative options to support local economic development. I have also arranged for the Community Ownership Support Service to contribute to the process by providing expert advice and support if required. Please let me know if you would find this helpful.

A copy of this letter including the attached report of the Independent Panel will be placed on the Scottish Government community empowerment webpages within one week of the date of this letter.

If you have any queries please contact Kathleen Glazik, Community Empowerment Team Leader at [Kathleen.glazik@gov.scot](mailto:Kathleen.glazik@gov.scot) or Malcolm Cowie, Asset Transfer Policy Lead at [Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot](mailto:Malcolm.cowie@gov.scot).



Aileen Campbell  
Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Local Government

Copied to:

Rebecca Carr, Community Asset Transfer Manager, Forestry and Land Scotland  
Jane Lamont, Independent Panel  
Archie Rintoul, Independent Panel  
Eric Samuel, Independent Panel  
Janet Ker-Russell, Interested Party  
Brian Russell, Interested Party  
Alec Christie, Interested Party  
Frank Garton, Interested Party  
Mark Clark, Interested Party

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